



FAUQUIER COUNTY

OFFICE OF ADULT COURT SERVICES

Annual Report
FY2020



A Year to Remember

While every year brings forth new challenges, 2020 will certainly be one to remember. Just shy into the New Year, the Center for Disease Control confirmed the first United States COVID-19 case. By March 11th, the World Health Organization had declared COVID-19 a pandemic. This news shattered our way of life and had far reaching impacts, both in the workplace and in our personal lives. Loss of life, loss of income, food and supply shortages, and mandatory shutdowns were prominent and widespread. The balance between work and home shifted as they intermingled like never before.

Adult Court Services did have to close our doors to the public for a brief period of time, but we remained working in the background. With guidance from local government officials, and in compliance with state mandates, we were able to develop an action plan to reopen our doors that ensured the safety of our employees and clients, and allowed for continued probation and pretrial services. Telework schedules and staggered shifts were put into effect to minimize exposure while still serving our community. This new way of life has been an adjustment to say the least. Our “new norm” now consists of face masks, temperature checks, hand sanitizing stations and practiced social distancing.

COVID-19 has certainly created unforeseeable challenges, but it has also presented us with opportunities to explore creative solutions that otherwise may not have come to light. As we adapted to our new work routine and environment, we quickly learned the importance of technology, and identified areas where we were lacking in this regard. Staff were eventually outfitted with work-issued laptops, soft phones, and encouraged to use various virtual platforms to stay in contact and engaged with their clients. All of this, of course, was dependent upon internet access, which remains a hurdle in rural Fauquier County. Certain levels of programming such as drug screens, MRT, and our litter control program were suspended for a period of time but are back in action with some slight adjustments.

The pandemic continues to bog down the wheels of justice. Judicial Orders remain in effect which have suspended the scheduling of jury trials and contributed to the continuances of cases. Unscheduled court closures and the inability to access or transport inmates due to COVID exposure have also played a large factor in the docketing of cases.

We move forward with hope that we will some day be able to return to some sense of normalcy. We look forward to gathering with our coworkers and counterparts in the criminal justice community. For now, we rely on virtual meetings and online training opportunities to stay connected with our staff and stakeholders.



A few of our smiling ACS staff members, pre-COVID.

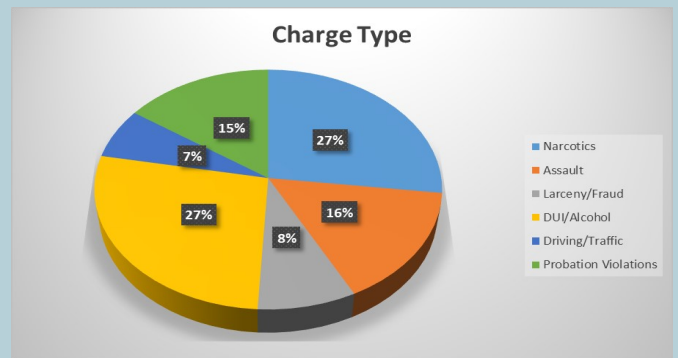
Probation Supervision

ACS probation staff provide the courts of Fauquier and Rappahannock counties a safe and effective means of supervising misdemeanor and non-violent offenders in the community, thereby reducing jail overcrowding and inmate housing costs. Using Evidence-Based Practices, staff conduct risk and needs assessments on each individual placed on probation and facilitate referrals for specific court ordered conditions. In an effort to lower recidivism rates, staff also assist offenders in activities such as case planning and goal setting to increase intrinsic motivation and encourage prosocial behaviors and relationships.

ACS continues to provide Victim Impact Panel services for offenders convicted of Driving Under the Influence and similar charges. The program, which was implemented in 2006 in partnership with Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD), reminds offenders that drunk and impaired driving is a choice that can have far reaching and devastating impacts. Volunteer speakers share their heartfelt stories of tragedy and loss to remind panelists that similar outcomes are 100% preventable. The panel, which was once held quarterly, has been temporarily moved to an online format due to COVID. Approximately 148 offenders completed this program in FY2020.

FY2020 Probation Data

Probation Referrals	467
Average Daily Caseload	288
Successful Closure Rate	75 %
M-OST's Completed	486
OST's Completed	145



Moral Reconciliation Therapy (MRT)

Moral Reconciliation Therapy, or M.R.T, is a Cognitive-Behavioral program that focuses on changing the underlying factors that drive criminal behavior. M.R.T was created by Drs. Greg Little and Ken Robinson in Tennessee in 1987. The program has been utilized by numerous correctional centers and drug courts since the early 1990s. In 2008, M.R.T was given the status of an “evidence-based program” by SAMHSA.

The program achieves its goals of reducing criminal behavior through a structured group format, where clients complete 16 steps, with 12 of these steps completed in 24 to 36 weeks. Examples of step exercises include clients admitting to and taking ownership of their anti-social behavior, creating and taking concrete steps to make amends, repairing broken familial bonds, and obtaining prosocial goals.

Clients who are placed on probation supervision by the Courts are assessed for criminogenic needs and risks, using an evidence-based assessment. Clients who qualify for M.R.T generally have a history of frequent law violations, disciplinary problems, and substance dependence.

ACS implemented an in-house M.R.T in April 2018 and the program is held every Wednesday evening at no cost to the clients. To date, we have had 12 clients successfully graduate from M.R.T. Feedback from the graduating clients has noted they respect that everyone is held accountable to the same rules of the group and they appreciate seeing their own positive progress with self-created, prosocial goals.

Litter Control Program

Implemented in 2007, the Litter Control Program (LCP) utilizes court-ordered community service workers to help combat littering and illegal dump sites in Fauquier County. Since its inception, the LCP has strived to find new ways to connect with the citizens of the county, as well as other agencies and non-profit organizations, in our efforts to expand our services. Litter complaints can easily be reported by phone, email or online by completing our Litter Pick-Up Request Form. Complaints are addressed in a timely manner with feedback and follow-up provided to the respective parties involved. The Litter Control Program has been well received by the citizens who send words of praise and thanks for keeping the County clean. The program has gone high tech and we use data tracking software that assists us with data collection and pinpointing trouble spots within the county.

FY2020 was another productive year for the LCP. Despite the challenges presented by the pandemic, 72 court-ordered community service workers completed 950 hours of litter pick-up. They collected over 23 tons of trash and recyclables from the roadways, watersheds and landscape of Fauquier County. We also implemented a surveillance program to help identify individuals responsible for littering and the illegal dumping of household and other large items in known target areas. The LCP partnered with the Parks and Recreation Department to assist with a few projects, which are ongoing, to include public access to the Rappahannock Riverfront and the ongoing maintenance of a Frisbee golf course at a newly opened park. We continue to assist the Fauquier Airport with grass cutting and other maintenance type work when called upon.

Pretrial Services

Despite the challenges of this year, our pretrial services department has remained busy, with both investigations and supervision. We continue to use the Virginia Pretrial Risk Assessment Instrument (VPRAI) as our tool to help guide judicial officers in making risk-based, informed bail decisions. The Praxis, which is a component of such, provides guidance to pretrial staff on appropriate release recommendations, special conditions of bail, and supervision levels to maximize outcomes.

ACS has recently purchased video conferencing equipment which allows our staff to conduct jail interviews with defendants from the safety of their own office. This technology is a welcome convenience to both our staff and that of the jail, as it limits liability, foot traffic and potentially unsafe situations.

FY2020 Pretrial Data

Placements	306
Average Daily Caseload	96
Average Length of Stay in Days	94 misd/156 felony
Investigations Completed	248
Consistent with Praxis	70 %
Successful Closure Rate	86 %

